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IX.

THE EMPEROR HADRIAN AND CHRISTIANITY.

I.

TRAJAN'S health grew daily worse. He started for Rome, leaving the command of the army of Antioch to his cousin Hadrian, who was also his nephew by marriage. An internal inflammation obliged him to halt at Selinus (now Silinty), on the coast of Cilicia. He died at that place, on the 7th or 8th of August, A. D. 117, at the age of sixty-four. The situation was gloomy: the East was in open rebellion; the Mauritians, the Britons, and the Sarmatians, were threatening to revolt; Judea, conquered but still seething, boded a new outbreak. A somewhat obscure intrigue, in which Plotina and Matidia appear to have been the leaders, gave the empire to Hadrian at this critical moment.

The choice was a happy one. Hadrian was a man of doubtful morality, but he was a great ruler. Brilliant, intellectual, and eager, his breadth of mind exceeded that of any other of the Cæsars. He did more to establish the empire than any ruler between Augustus and Diocletian. His administrative power was extraordinary. According to our modern standard, he governed too much, but he governed well. He definitely organized the imperial government: he marks an important epoch in the history of Roman law. Up to his time the ruler's house had been that of the first person in the state, consisting, like any other household, of slaves, freedmen, and private secretaries. Hadrian organized the palace; it was necessary to be a knight in order to hold office there, and the servants of Cæsar's household became functionaries. A distinct qualification was given to the permanent council of the sovereign, which consisted chiefly of men skilled in the law; the senators especially attached to the

government were already called *comites*; business was transacted through officers who were in part constituted by the senate, and not directly by the will of the ruler. The government was still despotic, but it was a despotism analogous to that of the early French monarchy, tempered by councils, by *comites*, and by independent magistrates. The social improvement was still more important. A great and noble spirit of true liberality and humanity was apparent in everything; the position of the slave received protection; the condition of women was improved; the excesses of paternal authority were restricted, and the lingering remains of human sacrifices were abolished. The emperor's personal character was in accordance with these reforms. He was full of affability to those beneath him, and would not permit his rank to deprive him of his highest pleasure—the right of pleasing others.

He had, with all his faults, a ready, open, original mind. He loved Epictetus, and understood him, without, however, feeling compelled to follow all his precepts. Nothing escaped him; he wished to be informed of everything. Free from the exclusiveness and prejudice which deprived the genuine Roman of any knowledge of the rest of the world, Hadrian had a taste for what was foreign, which he enjoyed and lightly criticised. He was especially attracted to the East. He saw and was amused by its impostures and charlatanism. He became acquainted with all its absurdities; he manufactured oracles, compounded antidotes, and ridiculed medicine. He was, like Nero, a man of letters, and an artist on the throne. His capacity for painting, sculpture, and architecture, was surprising, and he composed pretty verses, but his taste was not pure; he had his favorite actors, and peculiar preferences. His learning, in fact, was superficial, his architecture theatrical. He accepted no religion, no philosophy, nor did he deny any of them. His fine powers of mind vacillated like a weathercock, the sport of every wind; he may be judged by the graceful adieu to life which he muttered a few moments before his death:

“*Animula vagula, blandula . . .*”

All his researches ended in a jest, all his inquiries in a smile. Even the empire rendered him only half serious; his easy, un-

constrained manner was that of the most variable and unstable man who ever lived.

It was this habit of mind which made him tolerant. He did not annul the restrictive laws which, although not directly aimed at Christianity, kept it in constant antagonism ; he allowed them to be put in practice more than once, but their effect was weakened by his influence. In this respect he excelled Trajan, who, without being a philosopher, had a clearly-defined theory of government, and he was also superior to Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius, men of principle, who thought persecution justifiable. Hadrian's lax morals were of service in this respect. It is characteristic of a monarch that his faults should be of more service to the commonwealth than his virtues. The levity of a mocking wit, of a crowned Lucian, who looked on life as an idle game, was more favorable to liberty than the earnest gravity and high morality of accomplished emperors.

It was Hadrian's first care to modify the troublesome inheritance he had received from Trajan. Hadrian was a distinguished military writer, but not a military leader. He clearly perceived the impossibility of retaining the newly-conquered provinces, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and he abandoned them. It was, indeed, a solemn hour in which the Roman eagles retreated for the first time, and the Roman Empire admitted that she had gone too far ; but the action was wise. Parthia, as well as Germany, was inaccessible to the Romans. Great expeditions, like those of Crassus, of Trajan, and of Julian, all failed, while expeditions of a more limited scope attained their object, as in the case of Lucius Verus and Septinius Severus, who did not attempt to overthrow the Parthian Empire, but only to detach from it the tributary provinces which were nearest to the Roman Empire. A withdrawal so humiliating to the pride of Rome was rendered doubly difficult by the uncertainty which brooded over Hadrian's adoption by Trajan. Lucius Quietus and Martius Turbo derived a title almost as valid as his own from the last commissions they had held. Quietus was killed, and it may be assumed that the Jews, ever on the watch for evidence of the vengeance of Heaven in the death of their enemies, saw in his tragical end a punishment of the evil his savage ferocity had brought upon them.

It was a whole year before Hadrian returned to Rome, so that he at once adopted the vagrant habits which made his reign a perpetual tour through the provinces of the empire. He devoted the following year, fertile in constitutional reforms, to the gravest cares of administration, and then set out on a tour in which he visited successively Gaul, the banks of the Rhine, Britain, Spain, Mauritania, and Carthage. This variety and his antiquarian tastes led him to indulge the fancy of becoming the founder of cities, and the restorer of ancient remains. Besides, he wished to avoid the reaction of garrison-life for his soldiers, and he found occupation for them in great public works. This prompted the innumerable constructions which date from Hadrian's reign—roads, harbors, theatres, and temples. He was surrounded by a crowd of architects, engineers, and artists, disciplined like a legion. Everything in the provinces which he visited was renewed and infused with fresh life. At the emperor's suggestion companies were formed to collect funds for these great works, in which the state usually took shares. If a town were in any degree famous, if it had been mentioned by classical authors, it was sure to be restored by the antiquarian Cæsar. It was for this reason that he embellished Carthage and added a new quarter to it; on every side, towns which had disappeared, or had fallen from their ancient grandeur, arose from their ruins and were called *Colonia Ælia Hadriana*.

After a short stay at Rome, where he caused a smaller area to be inclosed by the *pomærium*, he set out in the course of the year 121 on a much longer journey, which lasted for four years and a half, since he traveled all through the East. This journey was even more successful than the former one. It was as if the old world was restored to life beneath the steps of a beneficent god. Hadrian, who was remarkably well acquainted with ancient history, wished to see everything, he was interested in everything, and desired to restore all to its former condition. Men sought to please him by reviving the lost arts: a Neo-Egyptian style came into vogue, and a Neo-Phœnician style was also attempted; cities began once more to put Phœnician legends on their coins. Philosophers, rhetoricians, and critics, flocked around Hadrian, who seemed to be another Nero, without his madness. The revival of a number of ancient and extinct civilizations was at-

tempted, not practically, but in the writings of archæologists and historians. It was in this way that Herennius Philo of Byblos tried, probably at the direct instigation of the emperor, to discover the ancient Phœnicia. Feasts, called Hadrian games, were reinstated by the Greeks, recalling for the last time the brilliant side of their former life; it was like a general revival of the ancient world; every country included in the great Roman Empire found once more its title to nobility and clung to it. The study of this singular spectacle recalls the sort of resurrection of the dead which took place in our own age when, in a moment of universal benevolence, everything was restored, Gothic churches were rebuilt, pilgrimages fallen into disuse were reëstablished, feast-days and ancient usages were once more observed.

Hadrian, whose culture was Greek rather than Roman, favored this eclectic movement, and largely contributed to it. His work in Asia Minor was truly wonderful. Cyzica, Nicæa, and Nicomedia, were restored by his efforts; temples of the finest architecture are an undying memorial of the cultured ruler who seemed to desire that the renewal of the world's youth should date from his era. Nor was Syria less favored. It was owing to him that Antioch and Daphne became the most delightful abodes in the world; every combination of picturesque architecture, all the fancies of landscape-gardening, and marvels of hydraulic power, were lavished upon it. Palmyra itself was partially restored by this imperial architect, and it received, in common with many other cities, the name of Hadrianopolis.

The world had never been so full of enjoyment and hope. There was scarcely a foreboding of the barbarians beyond the Rhine and the Danube. The emperor's liberal spirit diffused a general sense of ease. The Jews themselves were divided. Those who inhabited the villages to the south of Jerusalem were possessed with gloomy rage. They had but one idea—to restore by force the city they were forbidden to enter, and to render its former honors to the hill chosen of God. As for the more moderate sects, and especially the survivors of those who had suffered in Egypt under Trajan, who were half Christian and Essenian, they had at first no dislike to Hadrian. They were able to fancy that he had condemned Quietus to death as the punishment of his cruelties toward the Jews. They could enter-

tain the hope of seeing the eclectic emperor undertake the restoration of Israel as one whim among so many others. A pious Alexandrian attempted to inculcate these ideas in the form already consecrated by success. He assumed that a sibyl, the sister of Isis, had had obscure intimations of the trials reserved for these later ages.

II.

THE hatred of Rome is at once declared: "O virgin, tender and luxurious daughter of Rome, degraded to the rank of a slave drunk with wine, for what a marriage art thou reserved! How often shall a harsh mistress tear thy soft hair!" The author, at once Jewish and Christian, regards Rome as the natural enemy of the saints. Hadrian alone obtains from him the tribute of a genuine admiration. After enumerating the Roman emperors, from Julius Cæsar to Trajan, by means of the ambigorical process of the *ghemabria*, the sibyl sees the advent on the throne of "a man with a silver head, whose name shall be that of a sea. None shall equal his perfection, and he shall know all things. It is in thy reign, O excellent, exalted, and brilliant ruler, and in that of thy offspring, that the things I am about to tell shall take place."

The sibyl, according to custom, went on to reveal the most sombre images: all scourges were let loose together, and men became wholly evil. These were the throes which gave birth to the Messiah. Nero, who had been dead for fifty years, was still a nightmare to the author. This terrible serpent, this actor and murderer of his kindred, the slayer of the chosen people, the kindler of endless wars, would come to equal himself to God. After withdrawing to the land of the Medes and Persians, he brooded over the darkest schemes. Transported through the air by the Fates, he will soon return to be the scourge of the West. The author sends forth a still more furious invective against Rome: "Irritable, perverse, reserved for the direst fate, the beginning and end of all suffering, since it is in thy bosom that creation continually perishes and is reborn, source of evil, scourge, the point in which mortals cease to be, what man has ever loved thee? Who does not detest thee in his heart? What dethroned king has ended his life in peace in thy midst? The world has

been changed through thee in its inmost recesses. . . . Formerly there was in the heart of humanity the brilliant sunlight, the radiance of the prophetic spirit, which brought sustenance and life to all. Thou hast destroyed these good things. For this cause, O arrogant mistress, origin and cause of the greatest evils, the sword and destruction shall fall upon thee in that day. Listen, then, O scourge of men, to the harsh voice which predicts thy ill-fortune."

A divine race of blessed Jews sent from heaven were to inhabit Jerusalem, which was to extend from its present site to Jaffa, and was to be raised to the clouds. There were to be no more trumpets, no more wars; on every side everlasting trophies should arise, trophies to celebrate the victory over evil: "Then shall descend from heaven a marvelous man, who has stretched forth his arms on a fruitful tree: he who is best among Hebrews, who formerly caused the sun to stand still by his noble words and holy life." By this Jesus is undoubtedly meant, allegorically representing, in his crucifixion, Moses with his hands stretched out, and Joshua.

"Cease now to tear thy heart, daughter of a divine race, precious one, beloved flower, light of beauty, exquisite plant, cherished germ, gracious and fair city of Judea, ever filled with the sound of inspired hymns. The impure foot of the Greeks, whose hearts have plotted against thee, shall no more press thy soil: thou shalt be surrounded by the homage of thy children, who will prepare a table in accordance with the sacred oracles, with sacrifices of every kind, and pious prayers. Then shall the just, who have suffered the torments of anguish, enjoy more happiness than the evil they have endured. Those, on the other hand, who have uttered sacrilegious blasphemies against Heaven, shall be constrained to hide themselves in silence until the face of the world be changed. The clouds will rain fire; men shall no more gather in the sweet fruits of the earth: there shall be neither seed-time nor labor until men recognize the supreme, immortal, eternal God, until they cease to worship corruptible things, dogs and vultures, to which Egypt has offered the homage of profane mouths and senseless lips. The sacred land of the Hebrews shall alone bring forth the things refused to other men: rivers of honey shall flow from rocks and springs, ambrosial milk

shall be poured forth for the just, who have trusted with ardent piety and living faith in one God, Father of all, sole and supreme."

At last the fugitive parricide, whose coming has been three times foretold, appears upon the scene. He is a monster who deluges the earth with blood. He takes the city of Rome and kindles such a conflagration there as was never seen before. A general destruction follows: all the kings and nobles perish, and this is all to prepare for the peace of the righteous, that is to say, of Jews and Christians. The author's joy in the ruin of Rome breaks forth for the third time: "Parricides, lay aside your haughtiness and guilty pride, ye who have reserved children for your dishonorable caresses, who have exposed pure damsels to violence and contempt. . . . Be silent, ill-fated and evil city, once full of laughter. The sacred virgins shall no more find within thee the divine fire which they foster, for the fire so carefully preserved was extinguished, when I beheld for the second time the overthrow of another temple—the temple of everlasting beauty, the abiding sanctuary of God, built by the saints and incorruptible forever, which was burned by defiled hands. It is no god of common clay which this people worship: it is no marble image, fashioned by a clever workman; nor do they bow down before gold which leads the soul astray. They honor with sacrifices and hecatombs the great God by whose breath all things have their being."

A chosen man, the Messiah, descends from heaven, overthrows the heathen, rebuilds the beloved city of God, which shines more brightly than the sun, establishes a temple there, and a lofty tower, rising to the clouds, so that all the faithful may see the glory of God. The sites of ancient civilization, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, successively disappear; the colossal buildings of Egypt in particular are overthrown and strewed upon the ground; but one of her priests, clothed in linen vestments, converts his companions, and causes them to forsake their old rites and build a temple to the true God. This does not arrest the end of the ancient world. The constellations are dashed against each other; the heavenly bodies fall on the earth, and leave the sky untenanted.

In Hadrian's reign, therefore, there remained a handful of

pious monotheists in Egypt, who held the Hebrews to be the specially righteous and holy people; in whose eyes the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem was an unpardonable sin, and the true cause of the ruin of the Roman Empire. These men cherished a feeling of hatred and bitterness toward the Flavii; they hoped for the restoration of the temple and of Jerusalem; they thought of the Messiah as of a man chosen of God, and saw the Messiah in Jesus, and they read the Apocalypse of John. Egypt has long accustomed us to peculiarities in Jewish and Christian history; its development in this respect was not synchronous with that of the rest of the world. Such expressions as we have just cited would not find an echo, either in pure Judaism, or in the writings of St. Paul. Judea would not have consented, even for an hour, to regard Hadrian as the best of men, and to found such hopes upon him.

III.

WHEN traveling in Syria, Hadrian saw the former site of Jerusalem. For the last fifty-two years the city had been sitting desolate, with nothing to be seen but a heap of huge, displaced blocks thrown one upon another. Some groups of mean dwellings, Christian for the most part, were all that marked the outline of the top of Sion. The site of the temple was filled with jackals. On one occasion, when Rabbi Aquila made a pilgrimage thither with some of his companions, one of these animals escaped from its hole and disturbed their prayer.

These ruins inspired Hadrian with the sentiment aroused by all ruins—the desire of rebuilding the ruined city, of colonizing it, of giving to it his own name, or that of his family. In this way Judea might be cultivated again. Jerusalem, when it was once more a stronghold in the hands of the Romans, must serve to keep the Jewish population in check. Since all the Syrian towns—Gerazus, Damascus, Gaza, and Petra—were rebuilt in the Roman style, were beginning new eras, and adopting the name of this errant god, Jerusalem was too famous to be the exception to this historical revival and universal renovation.

It is probable that if the Jews had been less consistent to their ideal, if there had been among them some Philo of Byblos to represent the past history of the Jews as simply a glorious and

interesting variety amid the several literatures, religions, and philosophies of humanity, the inquiring and intelligent Hadrian would have been delighted, and would have rebuilt the temple, not precisely in the way the Jewish doctors wished, but in his eclectic fashion, as an admirer of ancient religions. The Talmud is full of Hadrian's conversations with celebrated rabbis, conversations which are certainly fictitious, but which are in harmony with the emperor's character as a wit, a converser, an inquirer, curious about strange matters, eager to know everything, if only to turn it into ridicule. But toleration is the greatest offense to the dogmatic. In this respect the Jews were like the enthusiastic Catholics of our day. The strength of their convictions does not allow them to take a reasonable share: they claim the whole. It is an insult to the religion which is held to be the one truth to be treated as a sect among so many others: it is better to be proscribed and persecuted, for this violence is a sign of its divine origin. Persecution is pleasing to believers, who find in the fact that they are hated of men a sign of revealed truth, since the wickedness of man is naturally opposed to this truth.

There is no proof that Hadrian, when he desired to rebuild Jerusalem, took counsel with the Jews, or sought to put himself in agreement with them. Nor is there any reason to believe that he had anything to do with the Christians of Palestine, who had less to distinguish them outwardly from the Jews than the Christians of other countries. To the Christians the prophecies of Jesus would have been falsified by the rebuilding of the temple. The Jews, on the contrary, all looked forward to its restoration. Judaism, without the temple of Jahveh, seemed to be a brief anarchy. Usages which assumed that the temple was still standing were retained. The tithes were still paid to the priests; the precepts of Levitical purity were still strictly observed; the obligatory sacrifices were only in abeyance until the temple should be rebuilt. But its restoration could be effected by the Jews alone; the least omission of the form prescribed by the law would have sufficed to call forth the cry of sacrilege. It seemed better, in the opinion of pious Israelites, that wild beasts should inhabit the sanctuary than that its restoration should be due to a profane mocker, who, after having rebuilt it, would not have failed to utter an epigram on the strange gods whose altars he had restored.

Jerusalem seemed to the Jews hardly less sacred than the temple. Indeed, the two were scarcely distinguished, and from that time the city was called *Beth Hamigdas*. The *Hasidim* were furious when they learned that the city of God was to be rebuilt without them. The massacres of Quietus and Turbo had only just occurred. An extraordinary terror brooded over the Jews; resistance was impossible; yet from that time a revolution more terrible than those which had preceded it seemed to be at hand.

It was probably in A. D. 122 that Hadrian issued his orders, and the restoration was begun. The new population was chiefly composed of discharged soldiers and foreigners. Doubtless there was no occasion for expelling the Jews, since their own sentiments sufficed to make them avoid the city. On the other hand, the Christians appear to have returned to the city with some eagerness as soon as it was habitable. The new town was divided into seven quarters, each directed by an amphidarch. The immense foundations of the temple, which were still in existence, suggested that site for the principal temple of the new city. Hadrian was careful that the temples erected in the Eastern provinces should recall the worship of Rome and the bond between the provinces and the metropolis. In order to indicate Rome's triumph over a local worship, the temple was dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus, the supreme god in Rome, whose attitude and solemn bearing were suggestive of Jahveh, and to whom the Jews had paid tribute since Vespasian's time. The building had four columns; and, like most of the temples erected in Syria in Hadrian's time, the front entablature was interrupted by an arcade, beneath which the god's colossal statue was placed.

The founder of the colony enforced the worship of Venus as well as of Jupiter. Hadrian caused temples dedicated to this tutelary divinity of Rome to be erected everywhere, and the most important of those built by himself was the great temple of Venus and Rome, of which the remains may still be seen near the Coliseum. It was natural that Jerusalem should have its temple of Venus and Rome beside the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. It so chanced that this second temple was not far from Golgotha. This afterward gave the Christians cause for singular reflections. The neighborhood of the two sites seemed to them an offense to

Christianity, which was certainly undesigned by Hadrian. The work made slow progress, and when Hadrian resumed his journey to the West, two years later, the new *Colonia Ælia Capitolina* was more of an intention than a reality.

For a long while there was a singular rumor in circulation among the Christians, to the effect that a Greek from Sinope, named Aquila, who had been appointed overseer of the works for rebuilding Ælia by Hadrian, became acquainted with some disciples of the apostles at Jerusalem, and was so struck by their piety and miracles that he demanded baptism. But a change in morals did not follow that of faith. Aquila was addicted to the follies of judicial astronomy; he cast his horoscope daily, and passed for a man of the highest learning in these matters. The Christians disapproved of such practices; the leaders of the Church remonstrated with their new convert, who disregarded the opinion of the Church, and continued obstinate. Astrology involved him in serious errors concerning destiny and fate. This irregular genius wished to unite things incompatible with each other, and the Church declared him to be unworthy of salvation, and expelled him from the community, which he deeply resented. His relations with Hadrian may account for that emperor's special acquaintance with the Christian rites.

IV.

TOLERATION prevailed at this time. Colleges and religious societies were everywhere increasing in number. In A. D. 124 the emperor received a letter from Quintus Licinius Silvanus Granianus, Proconsul of Asia, written in a spirit resembling that which dictated Pliny's fine letter from a virtuous man. The more earnest Roman officials were averse to a procedure which implied that guilt was involved in the very name men bore. Granianus showed the injustice of condemning the Christians on vague rumors, which sprang from the popular imagination, although they were convicted of no crime except of their profession of Christianity. When the allotment of consular provinces took place soon afterward, Granianus was succeeded by Caius Minicius Fundanus, a philosopher and distinguished man of letters, and a friend of Pliny and Plutarch, who appears as a speaker

in one of his philosophic dialogues. Hadrian replied to Fundanus by the following rescript : *

“A. MINICIUS FUNDANUS : I have received the letter addressed to me by your illustrious predecessor, Licinius Granianus. It appears to me that the matter cannot be left without inquiry, lest people otherwise peaceable may be disquieted, and a way may be opened to sycophants. If, therefore, the inhabitants of your province have, as they assert, any substantial accusation against the Christians, and if they can prove their accusation before the tribunal, let them pursue the legal course, and not be satisfied with questions and tumultuous cries. It would be far better to investigate any accusation brought before you. If a prosecutor comes forward to prove that the Christians do anything contrary to the laws, give sentence according to the seriousness of the offense. But, again, by Hercules, if any one makes this a pretext for calumnies, be observant of such a misdeed, and punish him severely ! ”

Hadrian seems to have replied in the same manner to other inquiries of the same kind. Men were denounced everywhere : the trade was profitable, since the informer received part of the goods of the condemned man. In Asia especially the provincial gatherings, which included games, usually ended with executions. The mob nearly always demanded the death of some unfortunate victims to crown the feast. The emperor opposed these cruelties as far as he could ; the laws of the empire were really in fault, since they gave substance to vague accusations which the caprice of the multitude interpreted as they pleased.

Hadrian passed the winter of 125–126 at Athens, and it was in this meeting-place of all men of culture that he felt the keenest enjoyment. Greece had become a kind of plaything with which the Roman men of letters amused themselves. Reassured as to its political consequences, they assumed the liberality which cost them nothing by restoring the Pnyx, the assembly of the people, the Areopagus ; they erected statues to the great men of old, they attempted to replace the old constitutions, to reproduce

* Several critics have raised objections to the authenticity of this letter. Hadrian's rescript has not the same warrant for its authenticity as Pliny's letter, since it does not appear in heathen records. In order to make it equally authentic, we should have the official record of Hadrian's letters respecting his government, and it should include the latter to Minicius Fundanus. Yet we have good reasons for regarding this document as authentic.

Panhellenism, and the confederation of cities with a semblance of freedom. Athens was the centre of these childish attempts. Enlightened Mæcenases were not wanting—Herod Atticus in particular, one of the most intellectual men of his time, and the Philopappi, the last descendants of the kings of Comagenis and of the Seleucidæ, who erected a monument on the Museum Hill which is still extant. Hadrian was quite in his element in this circle of teachers, philosophers, and men of genius. His vanity, his talents, his taste for brilliant conversation, were gratified when he was surrounded by congenial companions whom he honored by placing himself on a level with them, although he did not really renounce any of his prerogatives. He was an able opponent, and imagined that the success which he always obtained in argument was only due to his personal qualities. Those were to be pitied who offended him, or who were victorious in the argument. His latent resemblance to Nero, however ably concealed, was then revealed. He founded an incalculable number of chairs, and he was equally lavish in literary pensions. He gravely assumed the titles of archon and agonothetes. He himself made a constitution for Athens, combining the laws of Solon and those of Draco in equal doses, and he wished to see if it could work. The city was wholly restored. The temple of Olympian Jupiter, near the Ilissus, which had been begun by Pisistratus, was one of the marvels of the world; it was now completed, and the emperor assumed the title of the Olympian. Within the city, a vast square, consisting of temples, porticoes, gymnasia, and places for public instruction, date from Hadrian's time. These are far from possessing the perfection of the Acropolis; but they exceed all which preceded them in rare marbles and rich decorations. A central Pantheon contained the catalogue of the temples built, repaired, or decorated by Hadrian, and of the gifts bestowed both on Greek and barbarian cities. On an arch which is still extant, Hadrian was compared to Theseus, and one quarter of Athens received the name of Hadrianopolis.

Hadrian's intellectual activity was sincere, but he lacked the scientific spirit. All questions, divine and human, were discussed in these reunions of sophists; none was resolved. It does not appear that rationalism was completely accepted, and in Greece the emperor was regarded as a very religious and even supersti-

tious man. He chose to be initiated in the mysteries of Eleusis. It was paganism, in fact, which benefited from his course of action, although, since liberty of discussion is good in itself, it had some good results. His secretary, Phlegon, may have had a certain acquaintance with the legend of Jesus. The wide development of the spirit of controversy under Hadrian gave rise to a new species of Christian literature, which was about to throw a vivid light on the coming age.

V.

CHRISTIANITY, preached at Athens seventy-two years before, had borne fruit there. The church at Athens had not the continuity and stability of some other churches; it was its special characteristic to produce individual Christian thinkers, and the apologetic art had its origin at Athens.

Several of those men distinguished as "philosophers" had accepted the teaching of Jesus. The name of philosopher indicated a serious demeanor and a peculiar dress, a sort of cloak, which exposed its wearers, sometimes to ridicule, but more often to the respectful homage of passers-by. The philosophers who embraced Christianity did not abandon their designation and dress, and this led to the formation of a class of Christians hitherto unknown. Since they were authors and orators by profession, these converted philosophers at once became the doctors and controversialists of the sect. Versed in Greek culture, they had a greater aptitude for reasoning and argument than the purely apostolic preachers. It is a solemn moment which marks the advent of full consciousness. From that time, Christianity had its advocates; they argued, and were met by argument. The government saw that they were of greater importance than devout and simple men of Eastern superstition. Until now, Christianity had not directly appealed to Rome to deliver it from the false position in which it was placed. None of the preceding emperors had provoked such explanations by their character, since the petition would undoubtedly have been rejected, and no one would have read it. Hadrian's inquisitive temper and open mind, the thought that he would be pleased by hearing of some new fact or argument, encouraged overtures which would have been purposeless in Trajan's time. Combined with this belief, there

was an aristocratic feeling, flattering alike to the ruler and the apologist. Christianity had already begun to display the policy which she has constantly pursued since the fourth century, and which consists in treating with sovereigns above the heads of the people. "We are willing to enter into controversy with you, but the common people are not entitled to hear our reasons."

The first attempt of the kind was the work of one Quadratus, a man of importance in the third generation of Christians, and who was even asserted to have been a disciple of the apostles. Quadratus presented an Apology for Christianity to the emperor, which has perished, but it was highly esteemed in the early ages. He complained of the suspicions cast on the faithful by "evil men," and proved that their faith could hurt no one. He went further, and attempted to convert Hadrian by arguments drawn from the miracles of Jesus. Quadratus asserted that some of the men who had been healed or raised from the dead by Jesus were still living. Hadrian would certainly have been pleased to see some of these venerable centenarians, and his freedman, Phlegon, might have made use of them in his treatise on "Cases of Longevity," but he would not have been convinced. He had witnessed many miracles, and had only drawn from them the conclusion that there are an infinite number of incredible things in the world. Phlegon, in his teratological researches, had introduced several of the miracles of Jesus, and Hadrian must certainly have conversed with him sometimes on the subject.

Another Apology, of which Aristides, an Athenian philosopher and a convert to Christianity, was the author, was also presented to Hadrian. We know nothing about it, except that it was held in the same estimation as the treatise by Quadratus. Those who read it admired the wit and eloquence of the author, and the good use he made of passages from pagan philosophers in order to prove the truth of the doctrine of Jesus.

These writings were striking from their novelty, and must have had some effect on the emperor. Singular notions respecting religion crossed his mind, and he seems more than once to have shown symptoms of genuine respect for Christianity. He ordered the erection of a number of temples or basilicas, of which the inscription and object are not distinctly known. These temples or basilicas, which remain incomplete or undedicated, only

bear the name of Hadrian. Destitute of images as the temples are, it seems credible that they were so built by Hadrian's express desire. In the third century, when Alexander Severus really wished to build a temple to Christ, the Christians diffused the idea that Hadrian had wished to do the same, and that the *Hadriana* ought to contribute to the installation of the new worship. They asserted that Hadrian only stopped short after he had consulted the sacred oracles, which declared that if such a temple were built the world would become Christian, so that the other temples would be deserted. Several of the *Hadriana*, particularly those of Tiberias and Alexandria, were in fact used as churches in the fourth century.

Even Hadrian's relations with Antinous became a theme for Christian apology. Such a monstrous act seemed to be the culminating point of the reign of Satan. This last demon, of whom every one had heard, was employed to overthrow the other gods, which were more ancient and less easy to reach. Hadrian's era was subsequently regarded as the luminous apex of a splendid epoch, in which the truth of Christianity was manifest to all eyes. There was a feeling of attachment to the ruler whose good and bad qualities alike had had such favorable results. Men did not forget his immorality, his superstitions, his initiation into impure mysteries; but, in spite of all these things, Hadrian, at any rate in the estimation of some of the Christians, was regarded as an earnest man, endowed with rare virtues, who devoted the last and finest part of his life to mankind.

ERNEST RÉNAN.